



# A Marketer's Guide to Growth:

## *For You, Your Team and Your Company*

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A search for Chief Marketing Officer versus Chief Digital, Strategist, Revenue, etc. reveals a seemingly unending stream of articles about “who owns what?”. While debate continues over the most appropriate title given to the person at the head of the org chart, the responsibilities and expectations of marketing professionals have undeniably shifted.

**The functional lines of business are blurring as marketing, sales, technology and human resources converge into the nexus of a new era, and to compete effectively, business leaders must reexamine and redefine each and every process along the way.**

Organizational charts are continually tweaked, and marketing teams are being asked to do more, deliver more and lead more. To drive revenue and growth, marketers must embrace – and thrive – in this fluid role. According to General Electric CMO Beth Comstock, successful marketers are able to acclimate and adjust. “They are comfortable pulling pieces together. They are comfortable playing the integrator role ... [and] they are increasingly comfortable with data.”

The traditional Four Ps of marketing – **Product, Price, Place and Promotion** – are dead, and if your organization still calls upon these directives to develop communications and advertising programs, it's time to retool. As noted in [Ad Age's recap](#) of its latest Masters of Marketing Conference, today's marketing leaders must be highly adaptable. They must embrace varying market forces, shifting technologies, changing customer habits, emerging generational impacts and the uncharted transformation of their own profession.

## **The Perfect Storm of Changing Forces**

Globalization created seismic shifts in how our economic systems and cultures are interwoven. In “The Globalization of Markets,” Theodore Levitt's piece in the 1983 [Harvard Business Review](#), Levitt asserted that consumers present an unrelenting desire to have what others have, and that customization – and even regionalization – will give way to globally standardized products. He theorized that technology allowed low-priced, practical and dependable products to be mass-produced, marketed and sold via global marketing campaigns.

This may have worked well for a decade or two, but technology and communications didn't stop evolving, and the Four Ps no longer produce results. Digital has eclipsed every aspect of conventional marketing and with it, has ushered in new demands and opportunities. “One size fits all” marketing has been shattered by **Social, Search, Mobile and Big Data**. Consumers and corporate buyers alike expect more, accept more and demand more personalization. **Today's marketer must set aside the Four Ps of old and build methodologies and programs designed to tackle the Four Cs of a digital world: Customer, Content, Connection and Culture.**



This convergence of technology and shifting of customer behaviors impacts every aspect of business. And with that, the relationships among marketing, sales, IT and HR have never been more imperative or more complicated. CMOs, for example, are often advised to set their sights on annexing the CIO function or specific responsibilities. Considering that marketing's spend on technology is projected to [outpace the CIO's](#) by 2017, these debates will likely endure.

And, it's not just with IT functions where marketing finds itself being asked to lead in new ways. For years, sales and marketing have been connected and codependent for success. While that linkage remains, the method by which the two converge has evolved. The traditional purchasing process has drastically changed and various reports reveal that about two-thirds of the buying progression is completed online or via self-directed research – collapsing the traditional sales funnel.

The new purchasing process affects not only how sales organizations prepare for and respond to today's educated and savvy customers, but also how marketing teams engage in meaningful customer dialogue. Lead generation, deal velocity and wallet share now require that marketing help sellers engage quickly and effectively with customers and prospects. In addition, for the first time in history, multiple generations are active influencers and participants in the economy – from Traditionalists, Baby Boomers and Gen X to the Gen Y/Millennials and their younger cohorts of Gen Z. Each generation demonstrates its own buying preferences and engagement requirements...and marketing must successfully engage with them all.

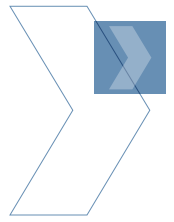
Deciphering the best moves will be different for every company, and businesses will experience hiccups along the way. Today's opportunities, however, should be met with a collaborative can-do gusto, rather than a tug-of-war. As a marketing leader, you can impact the actions and goals of other functions. **The key to lasting success is recognizing when and where it's effective to step in or step up and how to meaningfully support other internal functions.**

## **The evolution of the marketer's role**

We, as marketing leaders, must be the change that our businesses require. Having been issued both the challenge and opportunity to strengthen functional partnerships and increase our contributions to EBITDA, marketers are cultivating new ways to collaborate with IT, sales and human resources.

According to the [CMO Council's](#) "State of Marketing 2014" report, 69 percent of CMOs view themselves as trusted, strategic members of the C-suite. "With all the talk about tighter alignment in the C-suite, the study found that CMOs are finally walking the walk. Their efforts in making a business case for marketing spend is resulting in tighter alignment with CFOs, and marketing automation gains are creating tighter bonds with CIOs."

But, with so many changing forces, where should marketers focus their growth? What critical skills do the marketing leaders of tomorrow need to develop today? Begin by thinking about the perspectives and objectives of the internal teams around you, and consider ways in which you work cohesively with other functions to achieve mutual goals.



## New Challenges + New Opportunities = New Skill Sets

### Focus on Technology; Not the Function of IT

Recent and ongoing debates regarding the CMO vs CIO responsibilities have resulted in distrust and confusion. I move that marketing should study, understand and cheerlead for the technology systems that can drive revenue, not the functional organization of IT. Remove the debate of who should own what by focusing on the types of programs and technologies your company needs to generate leads, increase deal velocity and expand wallet share.

Just because you don't own it doesn't mean you don't have a role to play. Marketers must be technically proficient and serve as proponents for the systems that will help drive results. Big data utilization, for example, requires more than access to information – it requires a personal judgment on what's important to the market and to the business. CRM systems have the ability to generate enormous amounts of data. Yet without intelligent translation and application, businesses continue to blindly throw darts.

According to [Andrew Reid](#), President, Vision Critical, “The challenge is to make sense of the information and pull the right content from data repositories. That's where data analytics and business intelligence come in. Both allow marketing to sort through the noise of customer data to gather the right information [that] is key for product innovation, advertising and much more. The correct customer data can allow marketers to not only understand why customers did what they did, but to predict what they will do.”

This is marketing's vital role.

**Follow. Learn. Apply.** While my career background includes marketing management for technology and software companies – not to mention a personal love for all things technological – not all marketing professionals come by technical know-how naturally. Don't let that frustrate or stop you from becoming a tech-savvy marketer. There are several things you can do to increase your useable knowledge related to technologies and their applications in marketing.

- **Follow the leaders.** This part is very direct. If you don't already have a subscription to [Gartner](#), get one today. As an information technology research and advisory firm, Gartner produces some of the most trusted digital information on the market. In particular, go ahead and follow two of my favorite Gartner analysts [Yvonne Genovese](#) and [Laura McLellan](#). They regularly share interesting ideas and useful insight.
- **Apply what you learn.** Our own team probably hears my oft-repeated motto in their sleep: *Measure what you treasure*. As marketing leaders, we are responsible for adding financial value to our companies. To do that effectively, we must genuinely understand how our programs affect every aspect of our business. Through quality audience data and solid analytics, marketing can make insightful and effective decisions on how, what and when to communicate and how best to maximize engagement to drive revenue. **Today's marketers must go beyond counting website hits and Facebook likes to capturing, interpreting and utilizing data to determine how our efforts tackle the Four Cs of new era marketing and truly impact results.**
- **Develop a unified message with IT.** The relationship between marketing and IT – from the chief level officers to the project and program managers – must be cultivated upon a mutual respect, recognizing that each plays a significant role in the growth and success of the business. As a marketing leader, make it a priority to develop a rapport with IT. Share your goals and your vision. Be forthright and open to ideas. Identify overlap and work together to design a shared agenda that benefits and supports one another.



IT professionals respond to data, and as a new era marketer, you too must blend information about customers, products and markets with the big data analytics driving the next generation of business decisions. If you are able to be data-driven and communicate in terms that interest and are appreciated by IT, that shared orientation will open up opportunities for collective success.

## The Great Divide: Build the Sales and Marketing Bridge

Business author, speaker and contributor to *Inc.* magazine, [Geoffrey James](#) advocates that all marketers you hire should have at least six months of sales experience. Let's pause on this for a moment because I disagree. My early professional days were spent in sales, including straight commission roles. The wins, losses and experiences I earned during those years no doubt shaped the teams and programs I lead today. Having successfully been in both corners of the proverbial ring, I believe marketers can increase sales in meaningful and effective ways...even if they never carried a bag themselves.

Marketing's primary purpose is to drive engagement that generates business results – *revenue*. Sales' primary purpose is to drive deal closings that generate business results – *revenue*. Both functions are aimed at the tangible business outcome of revenue. But if revenue is disappointing, the blame game quickly ensues. Sales thinks marketing is out of touch with real customers, and marketing sees sales as self-interested. This beleaguered battle between marketing and sales should simply be abandoned, and there are actionable steps marketers can take to help make this happen.

- **Learn to speak a common language.** Stop talking to sales about branding, clicks and impressions. Learn to talk in terms of quality leads, the velocity of the sales cycle and the opportunities and challenges of retention and expanding wallet share. This is the language of sales, and to be a better marketer, you need to be a better communicator. Start by experiencing what it's like on the frontline. Ride with your sales people. Sit in on sales calls. Actively listen to their interactions, including the questions, pushback and pain points of target customers. Walking in sales' shoes (even if just by observation) will enable you to better understand and appreciate their role in the revenue pipeline.
- **Deliver resources that address sales metrics and goals.** From territory and account planning to pipeline management and intelligence sharing, marketing and sales can work together to develop an integrated customer experience that supports driving opportunities through the sales funnel. Hold regular meetings between sales and marketing, making sure major opportunities *and* problems are on the agenda. Leverage the intelligence and insight of your salespeople to develop content, campaigns, playbooks and initiatives that directly address customer demands. But don't stop with development. Execute in tandem. Partner with internal trainers and sales leaders to coach sales professionals on best practices that maximize efficiency and the effectiveness of your organization's resources and programs.
- **Help your sales force become social marketers.** Cara Hogan, at Salesforce analytics app InsightSquared, pulled no punches when [she wrote](#), "Today's marketers are blogging, Tweeting, Slideshare-ing and utilizing every type of new technology, but sales hasn't quite kept up with the pace of change." Whether completely representative of your company or not, I suspect your marketing team has data and skills in social marketing that could directly benefit your sales organization. Help your salespeople to become mini-marketers by coaching strategic social media engagement via content management and effective relationship cultivation.



In forward-thinking companies, the age-old drama between sales and marketing is collapsing. How you approach your relationship with sales will directly affect not only your own team's success but your business's ability to reach its financial objectives.

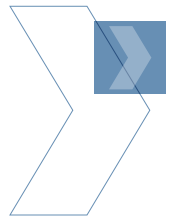
## **Human Resources and Marketing: Partners in the Digital World**

As we are pioneering our way through the evolving buying process, including transitioning from the outdated Four Ps to the new era Four Cs, so too are our colleagues down the hall in Human Resources managing the process of changing employee lifecycles. In an [article](#) written for Aon, an HR services firm, Sev Kiel and Tim Glowa assert that “leaders in human resources are responsible for managing a complex product comprising culture, environment, and reward elements — each element having different cost/value drivers, communication channel needs, process and delivery components, varying preferences across segments, and even shelf life.”

Sound familiar? Recognizing that both marketing and HR are in uncharted areas, now is the perfect time for functional leaders to strengthen working partnerships. In a few short years Millennials will comprise one half of our talent pool. Looking ahead to the 2020 workforce, HR executives are grappling with how best to attract, retain and support several generations of employees. And as marketers work to customize messaging and value propositions for multiple generations of buyers, these two functions have much in common.

- **Employee branding and corporate branding are inseparable.** Marketers are responsible for developing and supporting a great brand experience for customers. HR is similarly chartered for employees. HR's level of customization and message development for recruitment, training and engagement is reflective of marketing. Reach out to HR and get to know their goals and challenges. Leverage resources, share best practices and advise of lessons learned. Look for ways that marketing's research and branding experience can aid in HR's tasks, including internal communications, recruitment and culture-building.
- **Brand gaps and digital gaps lead to talent gaps.** Just as with the buying process, today's professionals research and predetermine opinions on career and workplace fit prior to accepting a recruiter's phone call, applying for a position or preparing for an interview. How employers present themselves online and in social media will directly affect the quality of talent they attract. Coordinating employee branding and corporate branding online and across social channels is critical to ensuring that your messaging is genuinely reflective of your company's reality. Marketing and HR should partner in efforts to strengthen all aspects of corporate social media, raising the level of presence from simple posts and pictures to earnestly interactive engagement. LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter are not options; they are requirements for any [successful recruitment strategy](#).
- **Onboarding, training and culture-building have never been more critical.** Companies need great people. And today's talented workforce wants to feel connected and engaged with their employers. Millennials, for example, cite flexibility, workplace culture and community responsibility as some of their top priorities when considering places to work. HR is central to ensuring that positive and inclusive onboarding and training programs open the door to productivity, retention and the establishment of values for lasting success. Marketing has many of the skills and tools to help develop and administer programs that meet these goals, including creative resources such as brand developers, writers and graphic designers. Share these capabilities with HR, and help your company strengthen its most critical resource - a knowledgeable and motivated workforce.





The [Disney](#) theme parks are often held as shining examples of employee satisfaction, for park “cast members” (almost literally) whistle while they work. Few organizations strive to be the happiest places on earth, but all companies have the opportunity to create workforces that embody shared values and goals. Both the new era buying process and evolving employee lifecycle can be influenced by an informed, engaged employee workforce – brand ambassadors – and marketing leaders can help guide the way.

## Develop the Right Resources via the Right People

In addition to building cross-functional relationships in support of driving functional and organizational success, you must also envision, design and cultivate your own marketing team’s source of talent and innovation. The business challenges of the next five years will require a blend of skill sets and characteristics unlike anything we’ve seen before. Fortunately for us, the talent we need stands ready – we simply need to understand how to cultivate it. SAP Co-CEO Bill McDermott advocated promoting Millennials as innovation leaders during a late [2013 speech](#) to the Northern Virginia Technology Council. I agree wholeheartedly and have been doing so in my own team for more than four years. When you pause and do the math, you’ll see that there really is no other way forward.

For the next fifteen years, Baby Boomers will continue to retire at the rate of 10,000 workers each day. Essentially, the entire populations of Florida, Texas and New York are leaving the workforce, and Millennials will replace them. By 2020, half of our workforce will be Millennials, and the first class of Gen Z – true digital natives – will be graduating college and beginning to make their own mark on the business world. For the first time in history we will have five generations in the workplace.

**Millennials – as a pool of talent – offer several significant [generational attributes](#), and marketing leaders should conscientiously develop leadership and team environments that embrace these benefits.** Millennials are highly educated and view the world with persistent optimism. They are collaborators, having grown up in the era of group projects. They are global in perspective and diverse in nature. Technology comes naturally to them – they are the creative forces, the developers and the users behind today’s innovations. Social media, search, mobile and data are simply part of who they are and what they expect.

Cultivating Millennial talent means understanding that this generation holds different ideas about how work and life should meet. Boomers and Xers strive for work-life balance. Millennials, however, view integration as the goal. Work should have personal meaning and purpose. Life should recognize and appreciate work. Leaders who build environments that support the Millennial mindset will find that this rising generation brings intelligence, enthusiasm and creativity to the office...or the Starbucks or wherever they plug in.

Millennials – with strong, positive guidance – have immense potential to effectively lead multi-generational teams. I’ve hired Millennial leaders to successfully manage a quality, outsourced team of Baby Boomers and Gen Xers. This generational integration is a highly valuable and effective strategy, and I can tell you with confidence that, when implemented intelligently, this approach will drive business results.

**Begin by building the team your business needs.** Hybrid team (integrated outsourcing and insourcing) business practices are not new to the marketplace, and they have been successfully implemented in the information technology and manufacturing sectors for years. Why is it then that marketing executives remain hesitant to employ similar management processes to their realms?



Let's consider some of the pain points today's marketers face:

- Lack of financial resources to hire and retain experienced, specialized staff
- Deficit of time and budget to stay abreast of fast-paced technologies and trends
- Inability to stop executing and spend time strategically evaluating and planning

Designing, implementing and managing a hybrid team strategy is a viable solution for today's marketing leaders. Hybrid teams encourage an intellectual food fight of strategic and tactical considerations, sparing businesses the group-think mentality sometimes found at full-service agencies, and they present a steady stream of creative and intelligent solutions.

With Baby Boomers and Gen Xers leaving agencies and corporate firms to pursue second, third – or perhaps just simplified – careers, the availability of seasoned talent is tremendous. The level of expertise obtainable via contract hire or consultant work creates favorable options for marketing leaders, particularly important in the small to mid-sized sector where big ideas often lack big budgets. A hybrid team strategy allows you to dial up and dial down resources as needed. In turn, this flexibility provides you the opportunity to design and build collaborative programs with IT, sales and human resources focused on the new Four Cs of the digital world.

## **Conclusion**

The dizzying speed of business requires that CMOs and their organizations evolve to address the changing environment. Build new skills; forge better partnerships; embrace emerging talent. Transform yourself into a next era marketing leader. By collaboratively working with IT, sales and human resources, and by leveraging a hybrid team approach, you can guide your company through these global, generational and technological shifts. Revenue remains king, and marketing's role in achieving financial results has never been more critical.